

*The University of Virginia Drama Department Examines American Consumerism and Culture in the Politically Charged Play **Truth and Beauty** by Ping Chong*

How does mass media influence American culture? Can markets and marketing be trusted? How much do American commercialism and corporate propaganda affect today's youth? These questions and many others are the focus of *Truth and Beauty*, a multi-media exploration by Ping Chong which continues the U.Va. Department of Drama's 2005-2006 season. The Drama Department will present *Truth and Beauty* in the Culbreth Theatre February 16-18 and 22-25 at 8:00 p.m.

Truth and Beauty features an ensemble cast comprised of both graduate and undergraduate actors performing a variety of sketches and scenes. Director Richard Warner describes the structure and tone of the play as "a combination of The Daily Show and Saturday Night Live. [*Truth and Beauty*] mocks and challenges and...takes on topics such as globalization, corporate corruption, gun violence, freedom of speech, and terrorism."

Warner, head of the Drama Department acting program, adds, "We hope it provokes discussion, makes people laugh some, [and] maybe makes them think a little about how much Corporate America is a part of their lives... *Truth and Beauty* is about our responsibility to sustain all that is great about America... our freedom, our diversity, our fight for equality." Warner's previous directing credits for the Drama Department include *The Ives Have It!*, *The Laramie Project*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Truth and Beauty was created by Ping Chong in collaboration with Michael Rhod and Jeff Randall. The show premiered at Virginia Tech in October of 1999, and the script was published in the March 2001 issue of American Theatre. Originally produced with a cast of two, U.Va.'s production will feature a cast of eight: Kate Brennan, Jonathan Cobb, Matt Fletcher, J. Hernandez, Karie Miller, Melinda Miller, Anjili Pal, and Nate Patten.

Tickets for *Truth and Beauty* are \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors (60+) and \$8 for students; full-time UVa students can use their ART\$ Dollars to purchase tickets. For more information, call the Drama Department Box Office at 434-924-3376 or visit the UVa Department of Drama website at www.virginia.edu/drama. The box office is open from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.